

Assize Sermon,

Preached August 3, 1685.

IN THE

Cathedral Church

St. Peter in Dorset :

Before the Right Honourable

Sir Edward Atkins,

And

Sir Thomas Walcot,

His Majesty's JUDGES of ASSIZE for the
Northern Circuit.

By WILLIAM STAINFORTH Residentiary
Canon of YORK.

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within the Minster Gates. 1685.

VIA

ALICE SCHMIDT

1881

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Church

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Leon. Welsted R^{mo}. P. D.

Johan. Archiepisc. Ebor.

à Sacris Domesticis.

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To the Right Worshipful
CHRISTOPHER TANKARD Esq;
High Sheriff
OF THE
County of Dork.

SIR,

IN meer Compliance with your Earnest Desires I have adventur'd to Print this plain Sermon. For tho' I am sufficiently assur'd, that no good Man can except against the Substance of the Discourse, or the honesty of its Design (which is to promote Christian Charity, and Christian Loyalty:) Yet I am so sensible of its Defects upon many other Accounts, that nothing but the irresistible Power of your Friendship could have over-rul'd and determin'd my will to this Publication. I know, Sir, your Over-value for the whole Composure proceeded from the perfect suitableness of its Matter to your Principles and Practices, which are, and alwayes have been Eminently Loyal, even in the worst of Times, when the Faction was bold and daring and formidable, and all the several Sects of Religion were

were united with the Men of no Religion in one joynt
 accursed Conspiracy against the Government: When
 it was accounted a Crime to be a good Subject, and all
 the Loyal men, by as gross and foolish a Solacism, as
 a furious and undistinguishing Malice could be guilty of,
 were Branded with the odious Names of Tories, Arbitrary
 Men, Popishly affected, and whatsoever might
 expose them to a popular scorn and hatred. But neither
 their false Pretences, nor false Reasonings, nor false
 Characters could Corrupt your Judgement, nor shake
 your Constancy, but you continued firm and immoveable
 in your Duty, and upon all just Occasions Bore up against
 the Rudeness and Insolencies of the Faction, with a Courage
 and Resolution which became you. And this deservedly got
 you so Considerable an Interest in the Esteem of
 his late Majesty of blessed Memory, that He judg'd the
 Power of so large a County, as this of York, could not be
 intrusted, at so dangerous a Juncture, in safer hands than
 your own. And the faithful Discharge and vigorous Execution
 of your Trust has procur'd you (no doubt) a proportionable
 Value with His present Majesty. And that His Majesty
 may never want a sufficient number of such Loyal
 Subjects, and that others may learn to become and
 continue such, by your excellent Example is the hearty
 and unfeign'd Prayer of

Sir,
 Your most Affectionat and most
 Humble Servant,
 WILLIAM STAINFORTH.

1 Timothy 2. 1, 2.

I Exhort therefore, that first of all Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men:

For Kings, and all in Authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all Godliness and Honesty.



P RAYER is a Duty, which is founded not upon Mutable and Arbitrary, but fix'd and unchangeable Reasons. It is a Duty, which results from the necessary Relation which is betwixt the Creator and the Creature, and is a proper expression of that Homage and Worship, which is naturally due from Man to God the Maker and Governor of the World: It is a decent Confession of the weakness, insufficiency, and dependance of Man: It is a just Acknowledgement of the Infinit Excellencies and Perfections of God, such as his Power, Wisdom, Truth Holiness, Goodness, Mercy, &c. And therefore the Light of Nature has all along convinc'd Men of the necessity of this Duty, and enforc'd its Practice and Observation upon them. For no People, who

believ'd a God and Providence, but testified this Belief by publick Adorations of the Deity, and by offering up to him Prayers and Praises.

And as *Prayer* is a necessary Duty, so also an inexpressible Favour, an invaluable Privilege: It is one of the Noblest Exercises, and Divinest Employments which a Rational Creature is capable of undertaking: For *Prayer* is an Address, an Ascent of the Soul to God; It is a Talking and Discourfing with the Divine Majesty. By it we have our Conversation in Heaven, and maintain and keep up a friendly intercourse, an humble familiarity and freedom with the Great Lord and Sovereign of the World.

But *Prayer* is not only a Favour and Privilege, as it is a Mark of Honour put upon us by the Allowances and Condescensions of the Divine Goodness, but as it is a fure and efficacious Means of providing for all our real and substantial Interests, both as we are Men and Christians. For there is fuch an invincible Power and Efficacy in *Holy Prayer*, that Omnipotency it self seems not able to resist it. It is represented in Scripture, as if it put a Force upon the Almighty, and by a pleasing and grateful Violence extorted those Blessings from him, which otherwayes he would not bestow upon us. And this is certain, that if it be duely performed, both as to the manner and matter

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matter of it, it never fails of its design, never meets with a disappointment, but falls down in a Blessing, and returns laden'd with Victory and Success. For God has promis'd Success to its performance, by assuring us, that if we do but ask, we shall receive. And *Matt. 7.* therefore that we may not be wanting and negligent in a duty so reasonable and necessary in it self, so much tending to the Honour of God, so much conducing to our own advantage, so much subservient to the interest and welfare of all others, St. Paul exhorts Timothy, That first of all, *Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men: For Kings and all in Authority, &c.*

It is generally the Opinion of Interpreters, that those several Words, which we Translate *Supplications, Prayers, &c.* have a distinct meaning, and signifie the several Parts and Offices of Prayer. *Ἀσκήσις*, which we render *Supplications*, denotes deprecations of Evil, whether of Sin or Punishment and any sort of Calamity whatsoever. *ἰκετεύειν*, signifies *Requests* and *Petitions* for all things which are good and desirable, which any way concern our welfare and happiness, and which relate to this World or a better. *Ἑντεύχειν*, signifies *Intercessions* and *Applications* in the behalf of others. *Εὐχαριστία*, signifies all manner of *Praises* and *grateful Expressions*, whereby we Celebrate the Divine Goodness, and Mercy for all

or

all his Favours and Benefits bestowed upon our selves ~~and~~ others.

The Words of the Text being thus Explain'd, they acquaint us with all the Parts of *Holy Prayer*, and teach us for what, and for whom we ought to make our Addresses to Almighty God. And from them we may make these two Observations.

I. We may Observe, *That we ought to Pray for all men.*

II. We may Observe, *That in an especial manner we ought to Pray for Kings, and all that are in Authority.*

i. We may Observe, *That we ought to Pray for all men.* These are the express Words of the Text, and therefore there is no need of any other Proofs, or Arguments to convince us of the truth of the Observation, or to perswade us of the Obligation of the Duty which is contained in it. But this is no more than what is clearly intimated, and fairly deducible from those other Precepts of the Gospel, which enjoin a Catholick Charity, and an Universal Good-will, and command us to do good unto all men. For *Prayer* is a proper effect of Charity, it being in its own nature an undeniable Expression of Good-will to those for whom it is exercis'd, and an infallible means, by the appointment and institution of God, of doing good both to our selves and others.

We

We Pray for our selves because we love our selves; and therefore if we lov'd others as we love our selves, we should be alwayes concern'd for their happiness, and as zealous to promote it by our Prayers, as we are to secure and advance our own. For Love is a powerful and operative Principle, and can no more fail to Act according to its Nature, and to Exert it self in instances of Benevolence and Kindness towards its Objects, than Fire can cease to burn and prey upon Combustible Matter, or than heavy Bodies can leave off to move downwards, and to pursue the Natural Tendency of their intrinsick Gravitation, when they are not resisted by some External impediments and Opposition.

Its true indeed, that our Charity may be greater than our Power, and we may be limited and restrain'd in the ways of exercising it for want of Opportunity or Abilities to shew it. Tho' one man may love all men, yet no man can Benefit every man by immediat Collation of those Favours which they may stand in need of. No man can apply Counsel, or Administer Instruction to all who want it. No man can by his personal Courage or Justice, rescue all who are oppres'd or persecuted. No man can cloath all that are naked, or feed all that are hungry, or give Alms to all who are ready to die with want and Poverty: But every man may Pray for all men, and

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intercede

intercede with God in their behalf. This is a way, in which any man may exercise his Charity towards all Mankind, and diffuse and spread it over the whole World. This is a way in which every man may prove an Universal Benefactor, and derive Blessings upon all men proportionable to their respective needs and necessities. And certain it is, that if we had a sincere and hearty Love for all men, if we unfeignedly desir'd their Happiness and Prosperity, we should alwayes remember them in our Prayers, and with a suitable vigour and intenseness of Spirit, recommend them to the Grace and Favour of Almighty God. The same Divine Charity which enlarged our hearts so as to take in all mankind, would extend our Prayers to a proportionable compass, and give every man a share, and an interest in them. Alas! We might as soon forget to Pray for our selves, as forget to Pray for those whom we love. For Charity (as I have told you already) is not an idle & unconcerned Passion, but an Active and Vigorous Principle, full of thought and concern for those on whom it is terminated, quick to discern, and ready to lay hold on every opportunity of doing good, restless and unwearied in its endeavours to promote the happiness and prosperity of its Object. And therefore if we lov'd all men, we should Pray for all men, and that not only because Prayer is a Powerful means of doing good

good to those for whom it is used, but also because we have no other wayes left of exercising our Charity, and doing good to the greatest part of Mankind.

And if we would be accounted the true and sincere Disciples of Christ, we must thus Love and thus Pray for all men. No consideration of their distance from us in respect of their Countrey ; no consideration of their difference from us in Matters of Religion ; no consideration of their Alienation from us in point of Affecti^on must make us forbear either to Love or Pray for them. Tho' they live in the remotest Parts and Corners of the World ; tho' they are Enemies to God or our selves ; tho' they are *Turks, Jews, Infidels*, or *Hereticks* ; tho' they hate us to death, and prosecute us with all the Expressions of an implacable Malice, yet still when we Address our selves to the Throne of Grace for our selves, for our Friends and Benefactors, for our Relations and Acquaintance, for Subjects of the same Kingdom, and Members of the same Church with our selves, we must take all the rest of Mankind into our Devotions, and with a sincere Love and Charity Pray to God for them. And in doing this, we do what is agreeable to the Dictates of our best Reason, and the Natural Equity of that Golden Rule which obligeth us to do to others whatsoe-

ver we would have them do to us. For there is no man but would have all others love him, and express that love by all such wayes as are in their Power of being Helpful and Beneficial to him, and consequently to Pray for him, if he is perswaded that any Good can be done him by such Prayers.

Nay, by Praying for all men we imitate the Divine Nature, and transcribe one of the most conspicuous Excellencies in it. For nothing can be more evident, than that God is affected with an universal Benevolence towards Mankind, and continually dispenseth the effects of such an universal Benevolence. For is not his Mercy over all his Works? Does not his Providence extend to all his Creatures? and do not all men in a signal and eminent manner partake of the Blessings of it? Are not we all protected by his Power, Preserv'd by his Care, and Fed by his Bounty? and tho' men daily sin against him, & by studied and deliberat Offences affront his Government and Authority, yet does he not bear with them, and continue his former kindness on them? does he not cause his Sun to shine upon the just and unjust? Does he not give Rain and fruitful Seasons to his Enemies as well as to his friends, and do they not partake alike of the Blessings of his common and unlimited Providence? And is not all this the effect of his Goodwill? Does he not do this to try if he can Reclaim them by Favour, if his Gentleness and Goodness,
and

and Forbearance will lead them to Repentance? For God would not have any one Perish, but that all should Repent and be Saved. So that by Praying for all men we exercise and express a Charity like to that of Gods, we Copy out his Universal and Unconfined Beneficence, and in some measure become partakers of the Divine Nature. And is not God's Nature the Standard and Measure of the highest, the most absolute Perfection? And must not we then adorn and Enoble our Natures, raise them up to the highest Pitch of Perfection by being conformable to God in our Universal Good-will, and by Praying for all men, which is the exercise and demonstration of such Good-will?

Lastly, By *Praying for all men*, we follow the example of our Blessed Saviour, who had such an hearty and sincere Affection for Mankind, that he laid down his Life for their Sins, and offer'd up himself a Sacrifice of Atonement for the Transgressions of the whole World. For he tasted Death for every man, whether Friend or Enemy, and shed his Blood for those who spilt it. He endur'd all the shame and ignominy, the pains and sorrows of the Cross even for those, who led and fasten'd him to it; and while he was under the quickest sense of the disgrace and torments of his accursed Crucifixion, his love for his Enemies was so far from suffering any
abate-

abatement or diminution, that it broke out into the brightest Flame of Infinite Tenderness and Compassion, and rose as high as Heaven in a most Ardent Prayer for Pardon and forgiveness for his very Persecutors. And the same Benevolent Mind, the same Charitable Spirit appear'd in a most Illustrious manner, in the *Primitive Christians* to the wonder and amazement of the *Heathen* World. For those early Christians liv'd that Holy Religion which they Professed, and put on the Loving Nature as well as the Honourable Name of the Blessed Jesus. No Injuries or Persecutions, no Torments or Death could overcome their Charity, but this was still invincible as their Patience; this Prosper'd and Triumph'd amidst the strongest Oppositions, and fiercest Provocations; this held out to the last, and turn'd their expiring, dying Breath, into Articulate Prayers for their Enemies, and when they could live no longer, this clos'd their Eyes, and Seal'd up their Lips, and went Victoriously with them into another world, there to receive its utmost Complement and Perfection by being Eternally exercis'd upon the noblest, the most ravishing Object, God himself. And if we would be Christians in truth and reality, as well as in Profession, this Charitable Spirit, which was so eminently visible in our Blessed Saviour and his first Disciples, must live in and actuate us. For we cannot

not upon any other terms be either conformable to his Example, or Obedient to his Laws. And without such Conformity and such Obedience we may be any thing but Christians. For if we have not the Spirit of Christ, we are none of his, have no Relation to, no Interest in him. And it is plain, that Charity is the Spirit of Christ, his frame and temper of mind ; Ay, Charity, as it has all mankind for its Object, and as it expresseth it self in devout and affectionat Prayers for the good and welfare of all men. And this is sufficient to shew that we ought to Pray for all men.

2. We may Observe , *That we ought especially to Pray for Kings and all that are in Authority.* Tho' our Charity ought to reach all men , and tho' we ought to express it by Praying for them , yet there are peculiar Reasons, why we ought to Pray for Kings above all men whatsoever. And these Reasons are such as either concern Kings themselves , or such as concern us.

First, Such as concern Kings themselves. For if Kings have more need of our Prayers than other men, then it is plain, that upon their account we ought especially to Pray for them. And it will appear, that they have the greatest need of the Prayers and Intercessions of others, if we consider these following Particulars.

First,

First, Consider that the Duty and Office of a King is an arduous and difficult Imployment. There are in most men an inordinat appetite after Empire and Dominion, and they greedily desire to bear a Part in the Government of the World: But few men consider the Difficulties of such a Province, the weight and incumbrances of such a Burden. For if they did but seriously consider, what are the proper and Natural Ends of Government, what Abilities and Excellencies are necessary to qualify a man for the due Administration of it, what infinit pains and care must be undergon in the faithful discharge and execution of it, such thoughts, such reflections would mortifie the most aspiring Ambition, allay and extinguish the most violent thirsts after Empire, and make men not only contented but joyful in the state and condition of Subjects. For it is an easie thing to obey; there is required no great skill to understand, nor much industry to perform the duties of Subjection. It is the business of Governours to contrive the Rules, and prescribe the Measures of Obedience, which generally lye in a small compass, and are deliver'd in plain terms, and by a clear Publication are made known to all, who are concern'd to observe them. So that Subjects need not torture their Brains, nor strain their understandings to find out and discover their Duties. Their work
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is Cut out to their hands and laid before their Eyes, and a tractable Nature, and an humble Spirit, and a peaceable mind will enable them to practise it with great ease and chearfulness.

But it is far otherwise with Kings and Princes, who have a large Sphere to move in, and an infinit variety of Particulars to attend unto, which require an excellent Understanding, a Solid Judgement, a prudent foresight, a constant Presence of mind, an active Temper, an unwearied Industry, a patient Spirit, an upright Intention, a Courageous Heart, a steady Resolution to dispose and order and manage them for the publick Good, for which Government is Instituted and Governours are appointed. But alas! It is not for me to Discourse of the Art of Government, nor to enumerate all those Particular Excellencies and Qualifications, which are necessary to complete and furnish out a man of Political Prudence. My business is only to convince you, that it is an hard thing to Govern wisely, and that so many Gifts and Graces are necessary to make up and constitute a Prudent Governour, as few men enjoy, and God only can dispense. And therefore we are under the strongest Obligations of Charity to Pray for Kings, and to beseech God that he would furnish them with Abilities proportionable to the difficulties of their Employment, that he would direct them by

his wisdom and assist them by his Power, that in all cases of Publick Concernment he would enable them to judge, determin and Execute in such a manner as may best comply with the ends of Government, and the Reasons of their Institution.

2. Consider, that Kings are exposed to more numerous and dangerous Temptations than other men. Temptation is a state of Danger and Hazard, and no man can be secure in such a State, who is not endu'd with such a measure of Divine Grace, as is proportionable to the strength and Violence of the Temptation. And tho' it be true, that no condition of life can boast of an exemption from the Assaults and Incursions of Temptations, yet none is crowded and press'd with such Numbers and such variety of them, as that of Kings and Princes. As Kings are born with the same corrupt Natures, subject to the same vicious propensions and inclinations, and susceptible of the same sinful impressions with other men, so they are in greater danger than other men of being overcome by their evil Passions, and led Captive by their exorbitant Lusts and Appetites. For whatsoever is peculiar to them as Kings, and distinguisheth them from the Common Condition of their Subjects, is a direct Temptation to Vice, and Ministers both Power and Occasion for the satisfaction of their unreasonable Lusts and Passions. The great-

greatness of their Authority, and the Incoercibility of their Persons, the Vastness of their Power, and the Affluence of their Wealth and Riches are quick and powerful Incentives to Vice, strong and vigorous Provocations to evil. For all these Minister Matter and Fuel to Ambition and Pride, to Malice and Revenge, to Covetousness and Worldly-mindedness, to all the Sins of Sensuality, softness and Luxury. And we may be sure that the Devil will be watching all Opportunities to press these Temptations upon them with all the force and advantage imaginable. For the Devil very well knows, that the Interest of his Hellish Kingdom and the success of his Malicious Designs do in an extraordinary manner depend upon the Power, which he gets over Kings and Princes. For Vice is never so infectious as in their Examples. This gives Reputation and Authority to it: This renders it bold and insolent: This procures it avowed Patrons and shameless Assertors of its Cause and Interests, and makes it spread and diffuse it self in every part of a Nation with a boundless and uncontrollable Licence.

To this I may add, That it is not the least part of the Misfortune and Danger, which Kings labour under, that they have few Friends and many Flatterers: Few, that will deal plainly with them, that will tell them of their Faults, admonish them of their

Errors, or put them in mind of their Duty; but many, that will sooth them in their Mistakes, applaud their very Vices, commend their very Deformities, put the brightest Colours upon their foulest Actions and turn their shame and reproach to their Glory. So that, these things consider'd, we have great reason to say, *God help Poor Kings*, we have great reason to pity them for the Eminency of their Station and the uncontrollableness of their Power, which indeed is so Necessary for us, but so dangerous to themselves, which derives so many daily Blessings upon us, but exposeth them to so many continual Temptations: We have great reason to Pray to God for such extraordinary measures and supplies of his Grace for them, as may defend them against their extraordinary Temptations, and secure their Innocency and Vertue from being overcome by the Violence of their assaults, and the importunity of their Sollicitations.

3. Consider, That Kings have more Enemies, and are in more danger than other men. Tho' Kings Administer their Government and manage Publick Affairs with never such an equal hand and prudent a Conduct, yet it is impossible to please and content the minds of all their Subjects, but still there will be some Sons of *Belial*, some factious and seditious Spirits, who either out of Envy or Ambition,

tion, out of Covetousness or Revenge, out of Enthusiastick Principles or false Maxims in Religion, will be Plotting against their Government and Conspiring against their Persons. Nay, the justest, the best Princes have oftentimes the most Enemies, and are in greatest danger of being destroy'd by close and Treacherous Arts, or by open and publick Insurrections. For bad men are uneasie and restless under a just Government, and impatient of those Restraints, which wholesome Laws and equitable Constitutions put upon them. Good Laws are against their evil Designs, and therefore they are against good Kings, who are the Fountains and Guardians of good Laws, and out of their Princely Goodness take care to have them strictly Observ'd and Executed. We have had in our Nation too great a demonstration of this sad Truth in the Accidents, which besel our *two last Kings of blessed Memory*; the first of which dyed by the hands of a bloody Violence, because he would not offer Violence to the publick Laws of the Land and the Religious Dictates of his own Conscience. And the other had infallibly succeeded him in the calamity of his Fate, as he did in the Justice and Mercy of his Government, if God by an extraordinary and Miraculous Providence had not prevented it. So that Kings by the Height and Eminence of their Station are so far from being Plac'd
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above the reach of Mischief, that they are thereby the more exposed to it, and are only fairer marks for evil men to take Aim at, to level and direct their Rage and Fury against them. Kings in this respect are like Tall Oakes, which are the most obnoxious to the Blasts of Storms and Tempests, to the Strokes of Thunder and Lightning. And certain it is, that it would be impossible for Kings to sit safely and peaceably upon their Thrones for any considerable time, if they were not in a peculiar manner the Care of Heaven, and the Charge of the Divine Providence. No Guards could secure, no Force could protect them, if God did not in a particular manner Watch over them, keep them under the shadow of his Wings, blast the Designs and restrain the Cruelty of their Enemies. *It is only God, who doth and*

Psalms.
 144. 10. *can give Salvation to Kings, and delivereth David his servant from the peril of the Sword.*

And how should this Consideration make us fall down upon our Knees and lift up our hearts in Prayer to God for the safety and preservation of Kings, for their defence and Protection from all the evil Designs and bloody Machinations, from the secret Plots and open Violence of their cruel and implacable Enemies.

2. There are particular Reasons, which concern our selves, and which oblige us especially to Pray for Kings. For

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1. Consider, That it is all our Interests to Pray for Kings. For our Happiness and Prosperity is bound up and included in theirs, and whatsoever good we do them by our Prayers or any other means, we all share in the Advantage of it, and the Blessing, which falls upon them, like the Sacred Oyle, which was powr'd upon Aaron's head, runs down to the very Skirts of their Garments, descends upon the meanest of their Subjects, who all enjoy it in some kind and in some measure or other, in the excellent Effects and Fruits of their Government.

Civil Peace is one of the greatest Blessings of this World: It is that, which makes our Lives a comfort, and gives relish and sweetness to all our other enjoyments. But there can be no Peace without Government, nor Government without Laws, nor Laws without an Authority to Enact and Execute them. Now, this Authority is Vested in Kings, tho' as to the Exercise of it, it may be variously Modify'd, Bounded and Limited according to the Fundamental Constitutions of several Kingdoms. So that, we owe all our Peace, and all the Blessings, which are derivable from it, to Kings and Princes. It is their Conduct and Government, which secures unto us our Lives, our Possessions, our Rights and Liberties. It is that which preserves us from being devour'd by others, from being destroy'd by our selves.

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It is that, which prevents and repells Hostile Invasions and descents from Abroad; It is that, which hinders Confusions and quells Insurrections at Home: So that all our Temporal Happiness is bound up in that of the Kings, we prosper and flourish with him, and we all in common partake of his Felicity or his Misfortunes. And therefore as it is our Interest, that Kings should enjoy a long and uninterrupted Health; that they should improve in Wisdom and Knowledge, that they should grow in Goodness and Justice and all manner of Vertue, that they should increase in Honour and Reputation and Power both at Home and Abroad, so it is our Interest to Pray for all these things for them. For in all this we exercise a Charity towards our selves, we are but our own Benefactors, and all the while are providing for our own Peace and Safety.

2. Consider, That we are bound in Gratitude to Pray for Kings. The Benefits, which we receive from their Government, ought to affect us with a suitable Esteem and Value for their Persons, and oblige us to all the Returns of Love and Kindness, which we are capable of making. The very *Heathens* styl'd their Governours Benefactors, and look'd upon them with a Reverence, and pay'd them Honours answerable to such an endearing and obliging Character. And the Holy Scriptures de-
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describe and represent Kings under such forms of Expression, as if all the good things we enjoy, were the issues of their Providence, the effects of their Wisdom, Care and Bounty. Thus *David* is styl'd *the Light of Israel*. As if what the Sun is to the Material World, *David* was the same to the Jewish State, dispensing Life and Motion and Vigour to all within the Orbit of his Sovereign Authority by the quickening Rays, the cherishing Influences of his Wisdom, Power and Goodness. And tho' this was said of *David*, who was a good King and a man after Gods own heart, yet no less is said of *Zedekiah*, who was an Enemy to Goodness and good Men. For even he is called by the Prophet *Jeremy*, *the breath of our Nostrils*: Which plainly intimates, that Kings are as necessary to the Being and Preservation of the Body Politick, as Air is to that of the Body Natural. And tho' bad Kings are like bad Air, which Vitiates the Blood and Spirits, weakens the Faculties and impaires the Strength and Firmness of the Natural Constitution, yet as the Mischiefs of a bad Air are not so great and destructive as a total deprivation of it, so the Miseries and Plagues of Tyranny are not so intollerably calamitous, as those of Anarchy and Confusion. For where there is confusion, there is every evil work, and when Government is once broke up, then men are let loose upon one another,

2 Sam.

21. 17.

Lam. 4.

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and are at liberty to act all the Villanies and Oppressions and Barbarous Inhumanities, which their Brutish Lusts and Passions can tempt them to. And it is an Obvious and common Observation, that more Rapin and Oppression and cruel Outrages have been Committed, and more Blood has been spilt in our Late *Civil Wars*, than ever was done in the Reign of the most Inhuman and Merciless Tyrant, which sway'd a Scepter in any Place whatsoever. So that Tyranny is better than no Government at all, and tho' particular Persons suffer by it, yet the far greater part of the Community is Oblig'd and receive such Benefits even under such an harsh and severe Administration, as they could not enjoy in a state of Licentiousness and Confusion. And therefore the whole Body of the People is bound in Gratitude to Pray for the safety and Preservation of the worst Kings, because there are none so bad, but do good to the Nation in general, over which they exercise their Authority.

And if Subjects are Indebted to the worst of Kings, how much more then to the good and Gentle, to those who have an universal Good-will for their People, who exercise a tender and paternal Care over them, and study to preserve them in Wealth, Peace and Godliness? Such Princes are the greatest Blessings which Heaven can bestow upon us; for they

they pursue the natural and proper Ends of their Authority, and imploy their Power for all those useful and beneficial Purposes, for which it is given them. They do not Rule so much for themselves, as for us, and are indeed eventually as well as designedly the Ministers of God to us for good.

And can we ever be too much affected with the sense of their Favours and Benefits? Can we ever be sufficiently Grateful for them? Or can we express our Gratitude in too many hearty and affectionate Prayers to God for them? Surely, we cannot but look upon our selves Oblig'd to do them all the good we can, who are the Authors of so much good, the Dispensers of so many Blessings to us. And therefore, if by our Prayers we can contribute to their Interests and advantage, We must needs think our selves bound in Gratitude to assist them with such a cheap, such an easie way of expressing our Good-will and charity towards them.

3. Consider, That as Prayer is the best means we can use to make Kings wise and just and merciful and prosperous in their Government, so also Prayer is the only means allow'd us by God for Redressing those Grievances and Mischiefs, which at any time we may suffer from the violent abuse of their Power, and the irregular Administration of their Authority. For if Princes are bad Men, and Oppress their

Subjects against Reason and against Law, we have no remedy left us, but Prayers to God, in whose hands are the Hearts of Kings, and who can turn and dispose them, as seemeth best to his Godly Wisdom. They are God's Ministers and act by his Authority, and therefore for his sake we must be subject to them. Whatsoever Injuries they heap upon us; whatsoever Violences and Persecutions we suffer under them, we must not permit our Passions to rise and swell against them, nor vent themselves in undutiful Language, in indecent Reflections, in scandalous Reproaches, in Factious Complaints or Seditious Murmurings; much less must we take up Arms, and by Force Resist their Persons or Authority. For the Apostle hath told us in expresse terms, *That*

Rom. 13. *we must be Subject not only for wrath but conscience.* But all Resistance is inconsistent with Subjection, for it sets us above our Prince, and makes him accountable at our Tribunal. Nay, the same Apostle, to discourage us for ever from any Rebellious Attempts and forcible Resistance, has assur'd us, that we cannot Resist but at the certain Peril of our immortal Souls, *for they that resist (saith he) shall receive to themselves damnation.* So that, how distressed, how afflicted soever our Condition may prove through the Arbitrary and Merciless Executions of a Tyrannical Prince, we must not make use of any other Weapons against him

him, than what God has put into our hands, which are only Prayers and Tears: We must no other way oppose him than by desiring of God, that he would convert him to the love of Truth and Justice and Mercy; or at least restrain him from his Violent and Outragious Practises. And this very Consideration is sufficient to convince us, *That we ought especially to Pray for Kings.*

4. Consider, That by Praying for Kings we do that which in a peculiar manner is pleasing to God and agreeable to his will. And therefore, not to Pray at all for them, or to Pray for them with a cold and lazy and unconcerned Indifference is to be negligent and Remiss in a Duty, which God in an especial manner has oblig'd us unto. St. Paul having exhorted *Timothy* to take care in the first place that this Duty be performed, he enforceth his Exhortation by telling him, *that this is good and acceptable unto God.* ver. 3. And we cannot but look upon it as a thing good in it self to Pray in an especial manner for Kings, because it is such an Exercise of Charity, such a demonstration of Gratitude: and we have as much reason to believe it acceptable to God, because it is good in it self, because it is conformable to the Divine Will, and done in obedience to God's particular and expresse Commandment. And therefore if we would live in an humble Obedience

ence to God, and enjoy his Favour, which is promis'd only on the condition of such an Obedience, we must pray especially for Kings, who are God's Ministers, the Representatives of his Power and Authority, the great Instruments of his Providence in Governing the World.

1. If we ought especially to Pray for Kings, then this shews how little of true Christianity, how little of the Gospel-spirit and temper there is in those people, who are so far from Praying for Kings, that they bear a Malicious Spight, an Implacable Hatred against them; that Curse the King in their thoughts and wish him evil in their hearts; that would rejoice at any disastrous Fate or untimely End, which should befall Him. If this be their Praying for the King, it is a saying their Prayers backwards, a sort of Devotion, which those wretched Creatures are said to use, who enter into Leagues and Compacts with the Devil. And certain it is, That such kind of Praying is an immediat Disposition, the very next step to Rebellion, which is as the sin of Witchcraft.

2. From hence we may learn to what causes we may Ascribe the Failures and Irregularities of Princes, the Mal-administration and Miscarriages of their Government. Whatsoever is amiss in their Government, we are apt to impute it solely to their weakness and infirmities, to their Follies and Passions, or

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to some prevailing Lust and domineering Vice in them. For, because the Conduct and management of Publick Affairs is in their hands, we never look further for the Causes of publick miscarriages than to their very Persons, from whom they immediatly proceed. And thus we never Consider, how much it is in our Power to make Kings better or worse, and that the safety of their Persons, the Holiness of their Lives, the Wisdom and Justice and Prosperity of their Government do in a great measure depend upon the Charity of our Prayers, the Piety and Righteousness of our Conversations. For there is such a political Relation, such a Civil Union between Kings and their People, and their Interests are so involv'd and interwoven with one another, that their respective Virtues or Vices affect each other with a mutual and reciprocal Influence, and recommend each other to the Favour or Expose to the displeasure of God Almighty. Thus God sometimes withdraws his Grace and Protection from a good King, and suffers him to fall into Sin or Mischief for the sake of a wicked and perverse People. This appears in the Instances of Holy *David* and that good King *Josiah*. 2 Sam.

And this may teach us to look at Home, and to search within our own hearts for the Discovery of 24. 1.
the Causes, to which the Errors of Governours, and 2 Kings
the mischief of their Government are owing. For 23. 25.
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seeing God has appointed us to Pray in an especial manner for Kings, we may be sure, that there is virtue and efficacy in our Prayers to enable Governours to discharge their Office and Administer publick Affairs wisely, justly and Religiously; and if at any time or in any Instance they do otherwise, have we not reason to conclude, that the fault originally is in our selves, and that it so happens, because we either neglect to Pray for Kings, or else we do not Pray for them in such a devout, affectionat and importunat manner as we ought?

3. This shews the excellency of the *Liturgy & Publick Service* of the Church of England in this point of Christian Doctrine; how Evangelical in this respect it is in its Frame and Contrivance; how Apostolical in its Composure and Constitution with relation to the Duty, which we owe to Kings and Princes. For how amply and largely has it provided for our Devotions in this instance? How many *Collects* and *Prayers* does it contain for the King? And how are we taught by those *Collects* and *Prayers* to Petition God for every thing, which concerns our King in all his Capacities and Relations, and which are any ways necessary to make him happy and prosperous as a Man, as a Christian and as a King? And in what significant Words, and pathetick Expressions are those *Prayers* delivered, such as are proper to inform the
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dullest understanding and inflame the coldest Devotions? And this perhaps is one great Reason, why those, who are Enemies to the King, are such Enemies to our Liturgy, and have all along endeavour'd the Abolition of the one, as well as the Destruction of the other. But God be thank'd, we have not so learn'd Christ, as to despise his Publick Solemn Worship, because it is such a friend to the Person and Authority of his Vicegerent, and is so conformable to the Divine Will in such a main and important Duty of Christianity. No, we, I hope, shall value more and more the Liturgy of our Church, and take all Occasions to joyn in the Publick performance of it, because it is such an excellent Guide to our Devotions, and teacheth us in such various and comprehensive and lively forms to Pray for our King, and all in Authority under him.

But then withal I must crave leave to tell you, that if we would have our Prayers, which we either put up for our King or for our selves, to succeed and Prevail for a Blessing, we must take care, that they be the breathings of a devout mind, the issues of a pure heart, and proceed from a Soul intirely resign'd and dedicated to the Service of God. For all sin wilfully indulg'd vitiates and corrupts the Efficacy of Prayer, disarms it of its strength and power, and turns it into so much fruitless and insignificant wind,

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which is spent to no manner of purpose. For God is an utter and irreconcilable Enemy to all sin; he cannot look upon it without infinit Abhorrence, nor upon those, who deliberately practise it, without a proportionable Aversion. His Ears are deaf to all their Prayers, and it is neither the number nor Importunity of their Addresses, which can soften and render him pliant and yielding to them. *If I regard Iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not bear me*, saith David; and God heareth not Sinners is a truth, which the blind man in the Gospel could discern by the light and evidence of his own Reason.

So that if we would Pray successfully, we must live Holily: we must mortifie in us all vicious lusts and affections: we must abstain from all manner of wilful and deliberat wickedness: we must endeavour an universal and impartial Obedience to all the Laws of the Gospel. And then our Prayers thro' the merits of Christ will be as Incense, a grateful Perfume, a Sacrifice of a sweet smelling favour to Almighty God: Then all our Prayers for the King will have a blessed issue and a successful event, and will return in showers of blessings upon him and upon us, to the great and unspeakable Comfort of all our Lives.

But I must not forget to tell you, that as we ought to Pray for the King, so we ought to thank God for him. Not only Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions

ons, but also giving of thanks must be made for all men, for Kings and all in Authority.

Nothing is more natural than to be grateful to our Benefactors, and he is a Benefactor to us, who doth good to those, whom we sincerely love, and whose happiness we earnestly desire. Charity, which extends our regards and desires beyond our own particular interests, multiplies every favour, every mercy, which is bestow'd upon any single individual Person, into as many real kindnesses and distinct Obligations, as there are men who wish and desire the Happiness of that Person. And therefore if we had so much charity for the King, as ardently and devoutly to Pray for his happiness, we could not fail to bless God, whensoever we found our Prayers answer'd in any instance of his welfare and preservation.

But mercies and favours, which are bestow'd upon the King, are not only favours to us, because we have a Christian Charity and affection for him, as we ought to have for every man living; but they are favours to us, because they enable him to derive upon us all the Blessings of a wise, a just and peaceable Government. For we are to consider the King as a Public Person, and therefore besides that moral Union, which is made by Love; there is a Civil and Political Union between him and us, which results from the Relation, which he bears to us, as supream head and

Governour. And upon this account every mercy, which God confers upon the King, is a publick mercy, a mercy as universal as his Government, and Coextensive with his whole Dominions. It is not confin'd and limited to his Royal Person, but has an influence upon the whole Community, & in its effects and emanations reacheth every Member of the Body Politick. So that benefits and favours, which God vouchsafeth to Kings and Princes, are in this respect like fruitful and refreshing Showers, which fall upon high and lofty Mountains, and then descend and trickle down upon the Plains or Valleys beneath, and impregnate them with a rare and admirable Fertility.

Now, how great and manifold are the Mercies and Benefits, which God has confer'd upon our Gracious Sovereign? and therefore what strong and indispensable Obligations do we lye under to praise and adore the Divine Goodness for him?

How ought we to thank God for the wonderful Preservation of our King throughout the whole course of his Life, for the Miraculous deliverance of him from those eminent and apparent dangers, which he has been expos'd to both at Home and Abroad, in his own and in Forreign Countreys, at Sea and at Land, in times of Peace and in times of War? How ought we to thank God for his quiet and peaceable Succession to the Throne, and that in despite of the

extravagant fears, and wild jealousies, and desperate resolutions ; in despite of the rage and madness of the People ?

How ought we to thank God for all those Royal and Princely Virtues, which enoble his Mind, adorn his Government, and render his Administration so just and easie, and consequently so great a blessing to his People ?

How ought we to thank God for those fix'd and unalterable Purposes of his Mind to Govern us according to Law, to preserve unto us all our Civil Rights and Spiritual Privileges ? And how ought we to thank God for those several and repeated Assurances ; which the King has given the whole Nation of those his Royal Purposes, Assurances ! which can no more fail us, than he can cease to be that just, that Gracious and Generous Prince, which he is ?

How ought we to thank God for that late and intire Victory, which he gave him over his Rebellious Subjects, and thereby deliver'd both him and us from the worst of Enemies, Enemies to our God and Holy Religion ! Enemies to all, that can be dear and valuable to us ! Enemies who would have stuck at no Methods, shrunk at no Villany to have destroy'd the Government both in Church and State. This is a vast and incomparable mercy, and loudly Proclaims to the whole World, that God has a more
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than ordinary tenderness and care for our Gracious Sovereign, and that whosoever takes up Arms against his Authority, Fights against Heaven, and not only breaks thro' all the moral Obligations of the Divine Will (which has forbid all resistance of the Supream Power) but even vainly strives against the natural force and invincible strength of the Almighty Providence. So that every Rebel has all the reason in the World, without true and unfeigned Repentance, to expect Damnation both in this life and in that to come.

And can we now seriously reflect upon these various and infinit mercies, which God has bestow'd upon the King, and not be affected with a due and suitable sense of them? Or can we be affected with such a sense, and not feel our selves prompted with all the force and vigour of an ingenuous Gratitude to be thankful to God for them? Or can we be truly and sincerely thankful for them, and not make that due use and improvement of them for which they are intended?

Now what is the use, which we ought to make of all these Mercies, but to look upon them as so many Arguments and Motives to an Holy Life, so many Encouragements to repent of those Sins, which we have committed against God, and to continue in that just and indispensable Allegiance which we owe our
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Sovereign Lord the King? But how can we do this, so long as we listen to every disloyal Whisper, and factious Murmurings and spiteful Suggestions and reproachful Insinuations, which are contriv'd and propagated by disaffected and evil men to Expose His Majesties Person and Government to contempt and hatred, and to dispose and prepare his Subjects for Rebellion and Insurrections?

And therefore, let us have a care, how we give countenance and credit to any Factious and groundless Stories, how we admit or cherish any Popish fears and jealousies, which, by as great a Miracle as that of Transubstantiation, converts every idle Chimera into a Reality, and every improbable fiction into a solid Truth; which Robs men of their Senses and their Reason, and will not suffer them to believe the plain evidence of either. For is any thing more obvious to Sense, than that His Majesty takes all the measures of his Government from the Direction of the Laws? And is any thing more reasonable to believe, than that he will never vary from his present Practise, nor depart from the Publick Constitutions? Have we not the highest moral Assurance of this, which a breast inspir'd with sincerity, Justice and Generosity can give to the World? What is it then that people would have? Would they be happier, than God and the King can make them? If not, why do

Why do they not study to be quiet, and do their own
business? Why are they not content to enjoy all the
Privileges and Comforts of our holy Religion; and
all the Advantages and Blessings of our excellent Ci-
vil Government? Why do they not discourage all
seditious Talk and factious Rumours? Why do they
not Pray for the King, and thank God for him, as
Christians ought to do, & which if we could be per-
swaded to do heartily and affectionately, we should
be so far from lifting up an hand, that we should not
so much as lift up a thought against the King, or his
Government, but should be glorious Ornaments to
our holy Religion, by being illustrious Examples of
Loyalty and Obedience, which God make us thro
the Power of his holy Spirit for Christ Jesus's sake, to
whom with the Father and Holy Ghost, three Persons
and one God, be ascribed, as is most due, all Might,
Majesty, Dominion and Praise both now and for
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